

Roving Wildlife Reporters

Topic: Biology/Animals

Objectives: Observe and record behavior of wildlife

Grade Level: 4 – 12

Time: 20 – 25 minutes

Vocabulary:
domesticated
wild
naturalist
vertebrate
invertebrate

Materials: small portable tape recorders, blank audiotapes, batteries, magnifying lenses, small digging trowels, whistle

Location: All around Piedmont Park

Background: Wildlife is everywhere. It is above your head, under your feet and all around you. If you look closely, you will find wild animals in the air, on the trees, in the grass, under leaves, and in the dirt. In this activity you and a partner will become roving wildlife reporters recording, in detail, a few minutes in the life of a “wild” animal.

Advance Preparation: Prepare tape recorders with batteries and blank tapes. Give pairs of students a prepared tape recorder, a magnifying lens and a digging trowel. Remind the students that they are to observe the animals they find, but they should not disturb or harm them in any way.

Procedure:

1. Choose a partner to work with you. From your teacher, collect a tape recorder, a magnifying lens and a digging trowel for you and your partner to share. Practice with your partner recording and playing back a sentence or two on your tape recorder.
2. Pretend that you are naturalist wildlife reporters. Your job is to track down a “wild” animal and carefully observe its activities for five minutes. Remember that wild animals are everywhere and come in all shapes and sizes. Think of some interesting places to look for your wild animal.
3. Together with your partner, locate a wild animal. Turn your tape recorder on to “record.” Don’t record what animal you have found! Closely observe what the animal does. Use the magnifying lens if necessary. Do not touch the animal or interfere with its natural behavior. Without identifying your animal, record your observations on the tape recorder. Keep watching and recording the animal’s behavior as you watch. Try to be as detailed as possible including where the animal is, how it moves, its shape and what color it is. Speak softly so that you do not disturb the

animal. When your teacher blows the whistle, leave your animal undisturbed and return to your group.

4. Pair up with another naturalist team. Play your recording of your animal observations for them. See if they can guess what animal you observed. Then listen to their recording. Try to guess their animal.

Questions to think about and discuss:

1. Find out what animals other teams of naturalists found and observed. Were they vertebrates or invertebrates? What sort of wild animals do you suppose are most plentiful in Piedmont Park?
2. What range in animal sizes did the teams find? What was the largest animal found? What was the smallest?
3. Where did the teams find the animal they studied? From their observations, try to determine what the different animals eat. Do you notice connections between where the animals are found and what they eat?
4. From the naturalists' observations, how many different ways can you list that the animals move from place to place? Which animals move in more than one way?